



The Legend

**A PHOTO-TRIBUTE TO ASHOK KUMAR WHO PASSED AWAY
ON DECEMBER 10, 2001, AT THE AGE OF 90**

In

1936, Himanshu Rai
saw me, and despite my plea
that I didn't know a
thing about acting, cast me
as the hero of *Jeevan Naiyya*
opposite Devika Rani





I was

miserable in my early films.

I hardly seemed to be doing anything in them. So, my father almost found me a job in the income-tax office.



I was

not liked as a villain.

I did not like playing the bad guy either. In *Jawaab* I hated raping Meena Kumari.



Don't

believe all the stories of my affairs with my heroines. I did lose my heart to Nalini (Jaywant). It was a turbulent phase... We bought a telescope each and installed them on our rooftops. When we couldn't meet, we looked at each other through the telescopes.





Kishore

gave me a lot of respect, but he was very scared of me. That's why he never told me about all his marriages till they were over.

Anoop

was 16 years and Kishore 19 years younger than me... they were more like sons to me.



My

production office wasn't doing too well. I'd been cheated far too often. So I concentrated on acting in films like *Mamta*, *Bheegi Raat* and *Mere Mehboob*.

It's

true that I have 50 to 60 hits, but it is equally true that I had 250-300 flops.



My

sister Sati and I were very close as children. It was she who started calling me Dada Moni which means 'jewel of an elder brother' in Bengali.

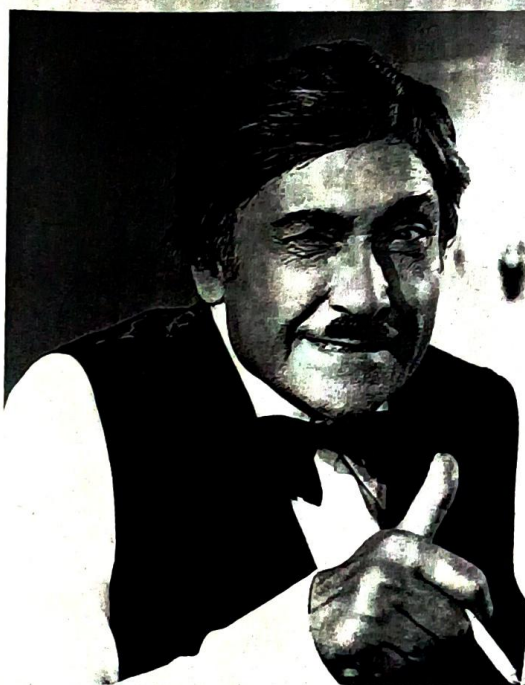
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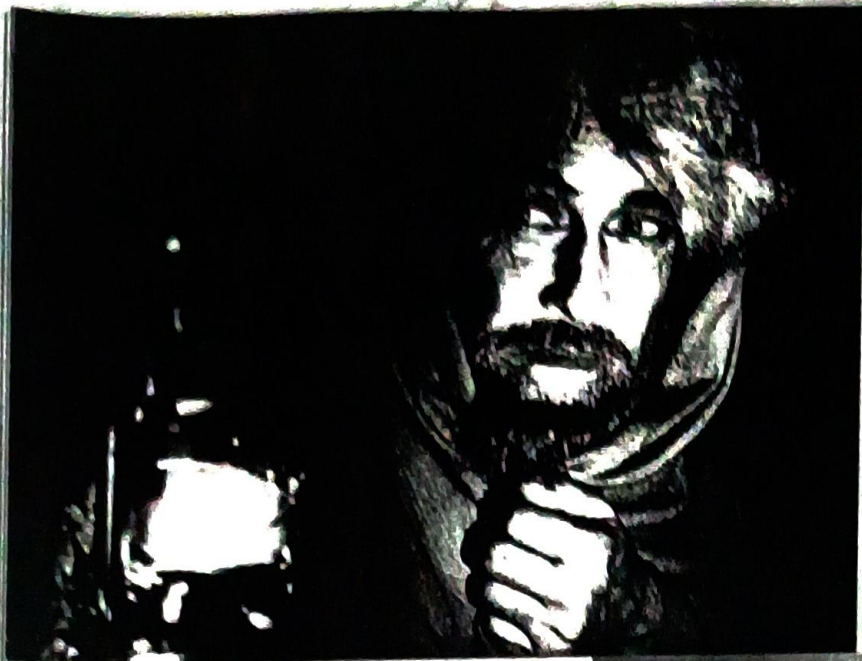
has brought me disappointment from friends, colleagues, wife, children and everyone. So I am practising detachment. I don't expect anything from anyone.



I could

never let myself go in love scenes, unlike Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor... I would think of what my father would feel or how my wife would react.





I've

always loved painting. In fact, my grandfather wanted me to go to Italy to learn art when I was in college. I need total solitude to paint, so I've got into the habit of painting only in the bathroom with my clothes off.

A spate

of good films like *Padmini*, *Khiladi*, *Aadhi Raat*, *Samadhi* and *Sangram* brought me back into the running after the arrival of Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand.

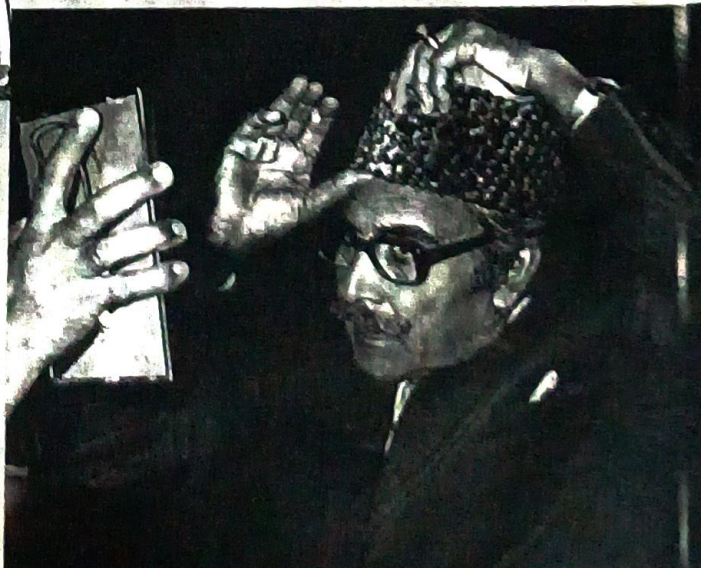


I have

never given myself completely to anything in life, not even to women. I have preserved myself religiously.

We

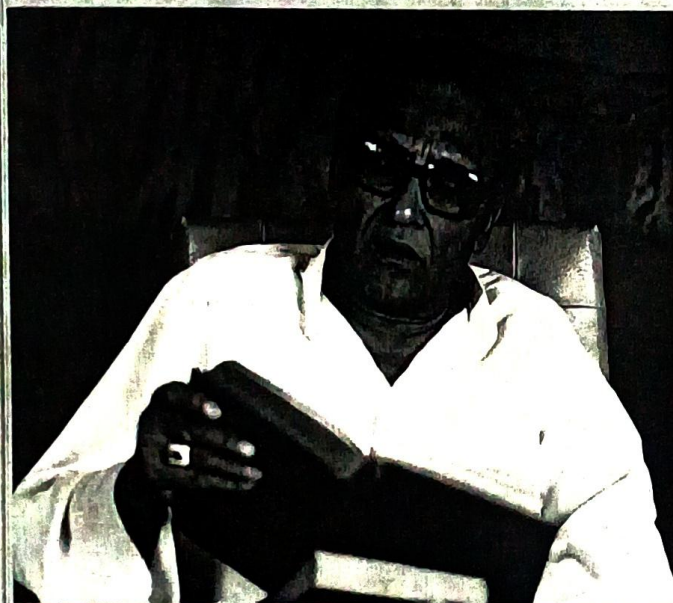
bought Bombay Talkies in 1947. We made some good movies like *Majboor*, *Mahal*, *Mashaal* and *Ziddi*. But we couldn't save Bombay Talkies. It closed down in 1954.





I worked

for 65 years. I don't miss those days. I earned plenty of money. I've given it all to my son, Arup to distribute it as he wishes among the relatives. He gives me money for my meals. That's all I need these days.



I always

expect total failure. It's incredible that I've managed to last this long as an actor. I don't believe people when they say they like my work.

I see

myself as the world's most conspicuous dwarf, that helps me tower over the others.



A group

of little boys mobbed me outside Essel studio calling out, "Dadaji, dadaji."

The serial *Dada Dadi Ki Kahani* was being shown on television at that time. I was elated. I thought, "Ah, even small children like me so much, I'm well-known to all the generations today."

